

**Voice4tenants (v4t)  
Executive Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 18 September 2008  
Walters Buildings, Cardiff**

**Attendance Record:**

<b>Roger Dafydd (Chair)</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Eric Bayley</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Anne Pethers</b>		<b>Apologies</b>
<b>Idris Pethers</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Beryl Oliver</b>		<b>Apologies</b>
<b>Ed White</b>		<b>Apologies</b>
<b>Bill Wall</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Betty Bishop</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Christine Chidlow</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Bill Fowler</b>		<b>Apologies</b>
<b>Stephen Wildblood</b>		<b>Apologies (leave of absence)</b>

**Observers**

<b>Andrew Davies (Castlegate, Caerphilly)</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Dean Walker (School Street, Nelson)</b>	<b>Attended</b>	

**United Welsh**

<b>Jayne Istance</b>	<b>Attended for minutes</b>	
<b>Jan Waters</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Malcolm Marshall</b>	<b>Attended</b>	
<b>Phil Carroll</b>	<b>Attended for item 4</b>	
<b>Sian Weeks</b>	<b>Attended for item 5</b>	

<b>Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	Apologies were received as above.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	The minutes of the August meeting were approved on block as a true and fair record.	
<b>2.2</b>	It was requested that future minutes contain the full names of all attendees, rather than just initials.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	Item 8 (August meeting). Clarification was given by Jan	

3.2	<p>Waters and Malcolm Marshall on the Tenant Participation budget. £16000.00 is allocated for use by General Needs tenants and £6000.00 for use by Supported Housing tenants. The Supported Housing budget will also be used to share the costs from the AGM.</p> <p>Item 7.10 (August meeting). The Chair confirmed he had accepted the nomination to run for the Executive Committee of TPAS.</p>	
4.	<p><b>PHILLIP CAROLL (BENEFIT ADVISOR)</b></p> <p>4.1 Phil Carroll attended the meeting to give a presentation on forthcoming welfare benefit changes.</p> <p>4.2 The Government is looking for ways to move people from Incapacity Benefit into more work based activities. From 27 October 2008 Employment Support Allowance will replace Incapacity Benefit.</p> <p>4.3 The new scheme will be rolled out to new claimants at first. Applicants will have to attend interviews and then will be found work placements. However this could cause problems for more vulnerable tenants and tenants with mobility issues. Certain tenants may clearly be incapable of working but will still have to follow the new procedures.</p> <p>4.4 The new allowance will affect United Welsh tenants as the amount of benefit which can be claimed will reduce. (Claimants under 25 will receive £47.95 per week.) This may cause an increase in rent arrears and also additional stress for the tenant.</p> <p>4.5 Phil also explained the changes to backdate rules for Pension Credit, Housing and Council Tax benefit. At present a new claim for Pension Credit and Housing/Council Tax Benefit for those over 60 can be automatically backdated for one year. A take-up campaign run within United Welsh has been extremely successful with over £14,000.00 of extra benefit being claimed in the last three months.</p> <p>4.6 Income Support rules for lone parents will be changing from 24 November 2008.</p> <p>4.7 Lone parents whose youngest child is over 12 will not be entitled to Income Support. Claimants must actively change their benefits from Income Support as it will not be done for them.</p> <p>4.8 Phil provided a handout which explained the changes in</p>	

	<p>more detail and he emphasised that he could help with any queries or appeals and gave his direct line number – 029 2085 8174.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>ASB TEAM (SIAN WEEKS)</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	Sian Weeks attended to update the Executive Committee on anti-social behaviour issues.	
<b>5.2</b>	Sian explained that since September, 11 cases of anti-social behaviour had been logged. 8 cases related to noise, 1 to vandalism, 1 was a hate case, 1 case had been raised in error, and 1 case had been closed satisfactorily.	
<b>5.3</b>	Christina Chidlow raised the issue of the fence at Fitzroy Lodge and Sian agreed to look into this.	<b>Sian Weeks</b>
<b>5.4</b>	The Anti-Social Behaviour Team's walkabout procedure was explained. Flyers are being drafted which, when printed, will be posted through the letter boxes of all properties in the area which has been visited. The flyers explain that the Anti-Social Behaviour Team has been in the area with the three fold aim of preventing anti-social behaviour in the community; being visible in the community and easily approachable; and checking environmental anti-social behaviour issues such as graffiti.	
<b>5.5</b>	Sian asked for the responses to the witness scheme survey, but although 7 questionnaires had been handed out, none had been returned. Sian handed new forms to Betty Bishop, Christina Chidlow and Bill Wall and asked for the forms to be returned within two weeks,	<b>Betty Bishop, Christina Chidlow, Bill wall</b>
<b>5.6</b>	The Chair suggested that information be given out to show that anti-social behaviour is not such a big problem as it is sometimes thought to be. Jan Waters confirmed that other Housing Associations are experiencing very serious anti-social behaviour issues. United Welsh has more lower level cases which can be harder to resolve.	
<b>5.7</b>	Sian explained some of the preventative measures that the Anti-Social Behaviour Team use but emphasised that no two cases of anti-social behaviour are the same. She stressed the importance of tenants reporting any anti-social behaviour and also the importance of involving other agencies.	
<b>5.8</b>	Sian invited members of the Executive Committee to join the Anti-Social Behaviour Team on their walkabouts.	<b>All</b>
<b>5.9</b>	A member of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team will attend	<b>Anti-Social</b>

	the next Police Community Support Officer meeting at Fitzroy Lodge.	<b>Behaviour Team</b>
<b>5.10</b>	Sian asked the Executive Committee to specify topics they would like discussed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team at future meetings.	
<b>5.11</b>	The v4t logo will be added to the flyers.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>WORKING GROUP (PROBATIONARY TENANCY)</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	Roger Dafydd, Eric Bayley, Idris Pethers and Ed White attended a meeting in Ty Cennydd Offices two weeks ago. The working group has now been set up and agendas and timescales are currently being decided.	
<b>6.2</b>	The Chair explained to the Committee that the probationary tenancies would not resolve all problems. More information will follow.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>EXCLUSION PANEL</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	Jan Waters explained the purpose of the Exclusion Panel and how it operates. This panel meets once a month and is made up of local authority and Housing Association representatives. At present the panel only operates in Cardiff.	
<b>7.2</b>	When an application form is completed, the applicant has to indicate whether they need help to maintain a tenancy. If certain boxes are ticked, then the applicant is referred to the Exclusion Panel which will then decide whether the applicant can be housed.	
<b>7.3</b>	Cardiff County Council have now proposed that this checking process should be rolled out to all transfer and mutual exchange applications and Jan asked the Executive Committee for their opinion. It was thought that any checks are a good thing and the more information that is being shared the better.	
<b>7.4</b>	Whilst this scheme is not in operation in other local authority areas, it was felt that the Association benefits from current involvement and may be able to push for the scheme's introduction in other areas. The Executive Committee then formally endorsed the Exclusion Panel.  Proposed: Bill Wall Seconded: Eric Bayley	
<b>8.</b>	<b>BUDGET 2009/10</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	Jan Waters explained the process for bidding for new	

	budgets for the next financial year and asked the Executive Committee for their proposals.	
<b>8.2</b>	Certain items are essential e.g. taxi costs, TPAS conference, grants, lunches but new proposals and ideas are needed. The Tenant Inspection scheme needs to receive adequate funding so a bid will be placed for funding for this, but Tenant Participation cannot stand still and needs more new ideas to move forward.	<b>All</b>
<b>8.3</b>	It was suggested that taxi costs could be reduced in future if the Executive Committee Meetings were to be held in Ty Cennydd. However after discussion, it became apparent that costs would not dramatically reduce if the meetings are relocated because Executive Committee members would still have to travel to attend the meetings. Time constraints were more of an issue and it was recognised that many of the Executive Committee members have to leave their homes early in the morning, returning home in the early evening. If meetings were held in Ty Cennydd, then as a half way point, members would have more free time on meeting days. Jan Waters suggested that a list of the possible meeting dates for next year be given to her as soon as possible and she would try to ensure the Board Room at Ty Cennydd was booked for v4t.	<b>Roger Dafydd/Jan Waters</b>
<b>8.4</b>	The provision of food at the V4T executive meetings was discussed. A member of United Welsh staff had previously expressed concern that Executive Committee members had to provide their own food. It was unanimously decided to re-order a buffet for the next Executive Committee Meeting from Innovative Trust.	
<b>8.5</b>	It was felt that the budget should be substantially increased to ensure there were sufficient funds to encourage and set up new tenants associations. United Welsh Housing Officers may be set targets of the establishment of three new tenant associations each so the budget will need to increase.	
<b>8.6</b>	All ideas for budget proposals to be forwarded to the Chair.	<b>All</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>TPAS CYMRU</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	Five members of the Executive Committee will be attending the TPAS Conference – Roger Dafydd, Eric Bayley, Christina Chidlow, Betty Bishop and Ed White.	
<b>9.2</b>	Idris Pethers has very kindly volunteered to take the five delegates to and collect them from the TPAS Conference. This is a 220 mile round trip. The Executive	<b>Idris Pethers</b>

9.3	<p>Committee expressed thanks to Idris.</p> <p>The new Neighbourhood and Participation Manager and Wendy Griffin will be attending the Conference as United Welsh representatives.</p>	
10.	<p><b>CHAIRS REPORT</b></p> <p>10.1 The Chair has attended several meetings recently and updates will follow.</p> <p>10.2 Many of the v4t Executive Committee members accompanied Board members on the recent site visits. All who attended asked that their thanks for an enjoyable day be passed to the Board.</p> <p>10.3 Many found the new trainee youth placement scheme particularly interesting and felt that this scheme should be promoted further to ensure United Welsh tenants gain the full benefits.</p> <p>10.4 The scheme is being extended to ensure that every contractor working with United Welsh takes on trainees.</p>	
11.	<p><b>FORWARD PLANNING</b></p> <p>11.1 This item has been covered by the budget (item 8 above). The Chair asked the Executive Committee to think of ideas to be put forward at the next meeting. Without fresh ideas, there is a danger that v4t will stand still.</p>	All
12.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>12.1 The figure put forward for budgetary approval will be made known to the Executive Committee, but there is no guarantee that this amount will be granted.</p> <p>12.2 Dissatisfaction was expressed with the current taxi companies used for v4t transportation. It was felt that new companies should be used and Christina Chidlow will get a quote from her local taxi company. The Executive Committee will seek assistance from United Welsh with the formal quotation process.</p> <p>12.3 Both observers asked to be invited to attend the next Executive Committee meeting and requested their names be added to the minute circulation list.</p>	
	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Thursday 16 October 2008 from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Ty Cennydd, Caerphilly.</p>	